

*Therefore, putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, **receive with humility the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made through him**. Without him was not anything made that has been made. **In him was life, and the life was the light** of men. The **light shines in the darkness**, and the darkness hasn't overcome it. (John 1:1-5)*

***The true light that enlightens everyone** was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own, and **those who were his own didn't receive him**. But as many as received him, to them **he gave the right to become God's children**, to those **who believe in his name**: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

***The Word became flesh**, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, **full of grace and truth**. (John 1:9-14)*

Jesus is God's expression of what He says about you.

Jesus is God's opinion about you.

Jesus is the **revelation of God's heart** toward you.

Jesus is the sample that demonstrates your authentic identity ready to be embraced by you.

*Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the assembly; of which I was made a servant, according to the stewardship of God which was given me toward you, **to fulfill the word of God, the mystery** which has been hidden for ages and generations. But now **it has been revealed to his saints**, to whom God was pleased to **make known** what are the **riches of the glory of this mystery** among the Gentiles, **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**; whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may **present every man perfect in Christ Jesus**; (Colossians 1:24-28)*

Worship means looking to something or **someone to define who you are** and how to act like yourself. Worship involves **belief, attraction, giving authority** to influence and **direct your decisions**.

Often our **feelings are manipulated** to entice us to **worship false sources** that **promise life and love**.

Our will – choosing who or what we will **believe most**, who we will make **higher priority** – is the **key element of worship**.

The very **first description** found in the Ten [Commandments] addresses this key issue.

*God spoke all these words, saying, **"I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me.** (Exodus 20:1-3)*

*Since then the children have **shared in flesh and blood**, he also himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death he might **bring to nothing him** who had the power of death, that is, **the devil**, and might **deliver all of them** who through **fear of death** were all their lifetime **subject to bondage**. (Hebrews 2:14-15)*

The burning question is this: **What right now do you believe about yourself?**
Are you **free** or are you **manipulated by fears**?

*We know and have **believed the love which God has for us**. God is love, and **he who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him**. In this love has been made perfect among us, **that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, even so are we in this world**.*

*There is **no fear in love**; but **perfect love casts out fear, because fear has punishment**. He who fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because **he first loved us**. (1 John 4:16-19)*

*For he was **crucified through weakness**, yet he **lives through the power of God**.*

*For we also are **weak in him**, but we will **live with him through the power of God** toward you.*

*Test [scrutinize] your own selves, whether you are in the faith. Test [discern] your own selves. Or **don't you know** as to your own selves, that Jesus **Christ is in you**?--unless indeed you are **disqualified**. (2 Corinthians 13:4-5)*

***Beware** therefore, lest that come on you which is spoken in the prophets: 'Behold, **you scoffers**, and wonder, and **perish**; for **I work a work** in your days, **a work which you will in no way believe**, if one declares it to you.' So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.*

*Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to **continue in the grace of God**. The next Sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to **hear the word of God**. But when the Jews [the people chosen by God to represent Him to the world] saw the multitudes, they were **filled with jealousy**, and **contradicted** the things which were spoken by Paul, and **blasphemed**.*

*Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, and said, "It was necessary that **God's word should be spoken to you first**. Since indeed you **thrust it from you**, and **judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life**, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so has the Lord commanded us, saying, '**I have set you as a light for the Gentiles**, that you should **bring salvation** to the uttermost parts of the earth.'" As the **Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God**. As many as were appointed to eternal life **believed**. (Acts 13:40-48)*

Do you **judge yourself unworthy** of eternal life? On **what basis**?

Behold, how great a love** the Father has bestowed on us, that we should **be called children of God!

*For this cause **the world doesn't know us**, because it didn't know him.*

*Beloved, **now we are children of God**, and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But we know that, when he is revealed, **we will be like him**; for **we will see him just as he is**. Everyone who **has this hope set on him purifies himself**, even as he is pure. (1 John 3:1-3)*

Don't be seduced into **imagining that this hope denies** the present tense **truth** of your actual **identity**. **Satan hates this hope** and uses every manipulative lie to make you **think you are less than** what Jesus and God says about you right now.

Were the Israelites **under bondage** or were they **free when God spoke** the Ten Words **describing their true identity**?

What do you **choose to believe as true about your identity** right now?
 Are you **free from sin** or are you constantly **fighting to get free** from it?
 If you find yourself **fighting sin** so often, what are you **believing God's word** over you?

*I have told you these things, that **in me you may have peace**. In the world you have oppression; but **cheer up! I have overcome the world**. (John 16:33)*

How does **His overcoming** the world supposed to **give me cause to cheer up** when I experience oppression?

This happens as I choose to **embrace my authentic identity implanted** in me by Christ. Embracing our true identity **dislodges the myriads of lies** that have defined what we thought about our identity most all our lives. It may **feel strange and surreal** at first, but that is **part of dying to self, denying ourselves** so that we follow Jesus in a **new and living way**.

Don't remember the former things, and don't consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing. It springs forth now. Don't you know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The animals of the field shall honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; because I give water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people which I formed for myself, that they might set forth my praise. Yet you have not called on me, Jacob; but you have been weary of me, Israel. (Isaiah 43:18-22)

The following statement comes immediately **after Paul shares his list of credentials** he used to rely on to **define his worth and identity** in the religious culture he lived to impress.

*Yes most certainly, and **I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus**, my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them nothing but refuse, **that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death; if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect [completed]; but I press on, if it is so that I may take hold of that for which also I was taken hold of by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I don't regard myself as yet having taken hold, but one thing I do. Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*** (Philippians 3:8-14)

What is this goal Paul pressed on toward? Achieving **righteousness**? That's what most people assume. The goal Paul lived for and pressed toward was **to know Him** and the **power of His resurrection**.

We are **not working toward being righteous** but we **embrace our identity as righteous** because the One we live in and who lives in us is righteous.

This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ. (John 17:3)

All things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. (John 17:10)

*But now I come to you, and I say these things in the world, **that they may have my joy made full in themselves.** I have **given them your word.** The world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that you would take them from the world, but that you would **keep them from the evil one.** They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in your truth. **Your word is truth.*** (John 17:13-17)

*Not for these only do I pray, but for **those also who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one;** even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, **that they also may be one in us;** that the world may believe that you sent me.*

***The glory** which you have given me, **I have given to them;** **that they may be one, even as we are one;** I in them, and you in me, **that they may be perfected into one;** **that the world may know** that you sent me, and **loved them,** even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23)*